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ABSTRACT

This workbook is a special report on Asian Americans, part of a series on ethnic perspectives. In three chapters, it covers Asian American culture, history, and immigration experiences. Study questions for recall and analysis of the text are presented at the end of each chapter. The following topics are covered: (1) the Chinese experience; (2) the Japanese experience; (3) the Pilipino experience; (4) the Indochinese experience; (5) titles and terms with special meanings to Asian Americans; (6) differences between Asian and European immigrants to the United States; (7) legislation concerning Asian Americans; (8) Asian culture and values; (9) solidarity among Asian Americans; and (10) educational and occupational accomplishments of Asian Americans. A seventeen-item bibliography and a timeline of Asian history are included. (VM)

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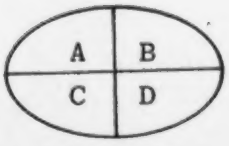
Cover: 

A. Chinese Workers - Railroads and Goldmining, Lumber

B. Japanese Farmers and loyal military service

C. Pilipino Laborer - Fishing, Grapes, Bean & Berry Fields, Sugarcane fields

D. Asian Americans in diverse fields today

The Asian American Experience

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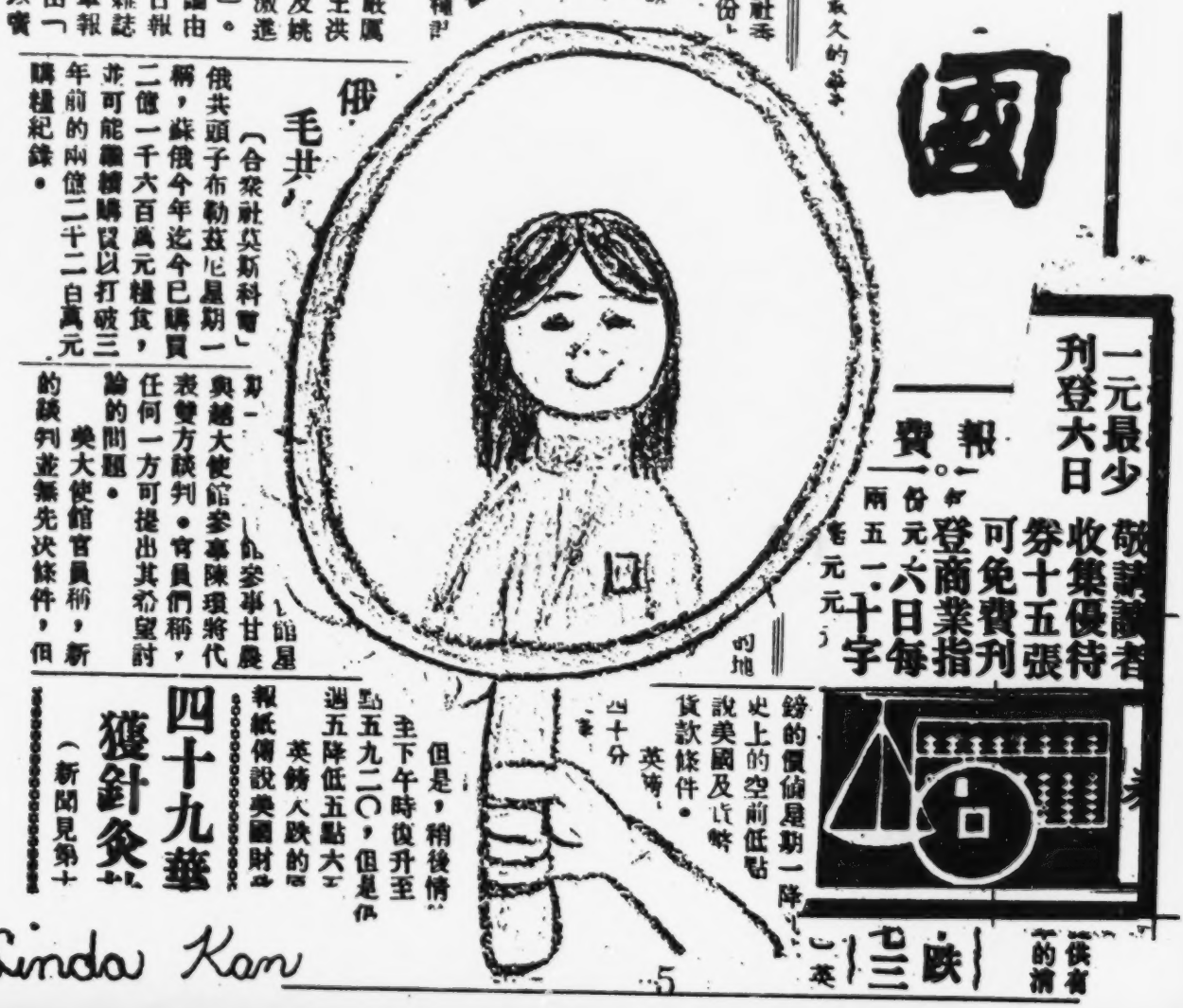
Preface

America is the home of many cultures and races of people. Because of this, the story of our country's past and present can be told from many different points of view. This booklet looks at American history through the eyes of one cultural group, the Asian Americans. As you read, ask yourself how the Asian American point of view might be the same or different from other cultural groups in our country.



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Chapter 1

Asians from Many Lands

Our history books often include many pages describing the experiences of explorers and settlers who came to America from countries in Europe, such as England, France, Spain, Holland, and Germany. These and other European groups offered much to the making of America. This booklet is about another group of settlers who came to America from the opposite side of the world, the continent of Asia. These people also have given much to forming the history of our country. They came to America from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, and other Asian countries. Today there are many Americans who have

their family and cultural roots in Asia. In the next few pages, we will look at the experiences of several of these groups, how they came to America, and how they made it their new homeland.

The Chinese Experience

There are records of Chinese sailors and shipbuilders arriving on the American continent as early as 1565, and creating the beginnings of a Chinese colony in Mexico City by 1635. The first large movement of Chinese people to America, however, came around 1850 with the discovery of gold in California. These Chinese prospectors were coming to seek their fortunes in the gold fields, and then planned to return home to share their wealth with their families. Since they saw themselves as temporary workers in America, these early Chinese were usually men traveling alone without wives or families. Because of the stories of gold, the Chinese referred to California and America as Gim Sahn, or the "Mountain of Gold." They came in such numbers that the Chinese were soon the largest group of foreign-born prospectors in the California gold fields.

During the last half of the 1800's America was experiencing rapid growth of its industries and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Vast numbers of workers were needed to keep up with this growth. The American government and businesses in the U.S. looked to China at this time as a possible source of new workers. China was experiencing famine, lack of jobs, overcrowded population, and political unrest, so there were many Chinese people who were willing to seek jobs, wealth, and what they thought would be better working

conditions in America. Another wave of Chinese, again mostly men, came in large numbers during the 1860's and 1870's to work on the railroads, in the mines and factories, and on the farms of America. Like the gold seekers, these Chinese men also saw themselves as temporary workers in America, who would someday return home to China to marry or to join their families, whom they continued to support with their American wages.

At first, these Chinese workers were welcomed in America because they were willing to work hard for very low wages. For example, Chinese provided 95 percent of the laborers who built the western half of the Transcontinental Railroad. Many factories and agricultural businesses became dependent on them. Chinese created some new businesses, such as the harvesting and drying of shrimp and abalone for shipment back to China. The Chinese also worked in fishing, construction, canneries, canal digging, and the garment industry.

However, attitudes toward the Chinese began to grow negative when they started to compete with other Americans in the job market. When the gold fields were mined-out and the railroads were completed, thousands of Chinese workers were forced to look for other jobs. Conditions in their homeland were no better and they needed to continue sending money to support families and relatives in China. Also, large numbers of new immigrants were still arriving from China to seek jobs in the U.S.

With many Chinese workers competing against them for jobs, some non-Chinese Americans developed bitter stereotypes which ridiculed the

language, dress, and customs of the Chinese people. For example, the queue hair style (long braid) was worn as a symbol of loyalty to the Chinese government, and cutting it off was punishable by death in their homeland. Since most Chinese workers in America still planned to return home some day, they maintained this hair style and many other traditional customs. Anti-Chinese feelings sometimes led white Americans to force Chinese workers to cut off their long braid, thus humiliating them in the eyes of their countrymen. "Anti-Coolie Clubs" were also formed at this time. These white workers tried to "protect" their jobs from being taken over by Chinese and lobbied the lawmakers to stop the immigration of Chinese workers into the country. Vigilante groups were sometimes organized to harass Chinese people with acts of violence and murder.

In order to protect themselves from this type of prejudice and discrimination, Chinese workers tried to move into areas of employment that were less of a threat to other Americans. Chinese men did not become laundrymen, cooks, garment makers, and household workers because they necessarily enjoyed doing this kind of work. They moved into these areas of work because they represented jobs which white males did not want. In this way the Chinese sought to avoid the harassment and violence which often faced them when they competed too directly with white Americans.

When the Chinese became successful in their own areas of work, they still experienced increased anti-Chinese activities. For example, the city of San Francisco, in 1870, passed a Pole Tax which placed a special charge on laundrymen who carried their clothes on poles

across their backs. There was also an "Anti-Ironing Ordinance" which made it illegal for anyone to iron clothes between 6:00 at night and 8:00 in the morning, thus preventing Chinese laundries from making extra money. Finally, in 1882, the U.S. government, because of pressure from Anti-Chinese groups, passed the Exclusion Act, which stopped the flow of Chinese people into America. This was the first time in the history of our country that any group of people had been denied the right to settle in the United States.

Because of the discrimination they experienced in America, many Chinese who could afford passage decided to return home. Most Chinese, however, could not afford the return fare or had decided to stay and make America their new home. For survival, mutual support, and a feeling of community these people tended to move together to form Chinese sections in large cities. Here they could share common social practices, language, food, and customs. Organizations patterned after those in China were formed to serve the needs of what was mostly a "bachelor society," since very few women had been able to leave China. The hui kuan was an "organization away from home" which served as a general support group for these Chinese men. The tong was a brotherhood group, operating somewhat like a "secret society" for supporting and helping control Chinese businesses in America.

One of the tragic outcomes of the 1882 Exclusion Act was that it stopped Chinese women from coming to America, and prevented Chinese men from bringing their families to join them in the United States. The Chinese, however, found a very creative way of getting around this legal barrier. Because white American business people

wanted to encourage a steady flow of trade from China, they had allowed Chinese merchants in America the right to bring their families into the country. Chinese American merchants were thus exempt from the Exclusion Act. The Chinese community took advantage of this by buying the official papers which would allow them to bring in their own relatives under the name of a Chinese merchant. These were called Paper Sons because they were officially registered under the family name of the merchant. These "paper sons" could then legally bring to America their "wives" and "daughters," thus allowing some Chinese women entrance to the United States. Of course, the Chinese who came to America under the Paper Son system had to keep their real family names a secret from non-Chinese society. This system did not allow enough women to enter the country, and by 1900 there were still twenty times more men than women in the Chinese community in America. Because of the Exclusion laws, two or three generations of growth in population were lost to the Chinese Americans.

It was not until the Exclusion laws were eliminated in 1965 that a normal pattern of family life was made possible for the Chinese. In modern years there are still many problems of discrimination and economic survival for Chinese Americans, but there are also many benefits in the raising of children and the revival of traditional culture. As the second and third generations became educated under in America, they gained more skills in making the American system work for their community. Now many organizations such as the Chinese Community Service Organization, health care programs, and social and bilingual services are helping improve community life for Chinese in America.

The Japanese Experience

The possibility of Japanese people coming to America was opened in 1854 when Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived in a Japanese port with eight man-of-war vessels under his command. Japan had wanted to remain closed to Western nations, but Perry's show of force "encouraged" them to open their doors. American businesses wanted to trade with Japan, and agricultural companies in the U.S. and Hawaii wanted to recruit laborers from Japan.

Japanese workers went first to Hawaii in 1868 where they worked on huge sugar plantations. Overcrowded population and lack of available land in Japan were two forces which helped them decide to seek a better life in Hawaii. Those who left Japan were often second, third, or fourth sons who had no chance of inheriting the family land.

The first group of Japanese who arrived on the mainland of the U.S. were students who came to further their education. Then a large scale immigration of Japanese came during the 1890's when they were recruited by American businesses to supply cheap labor for canneries, railroads, logging, mining, fishing, and agriculture. Chinese immigration had been stopped by the 1882 Exclusion law, and that is one reason why American business interests turned their attention to Japan during the 1890's.

Those Japanese immigrants who were married sent for their wives and families after a few years. Single men who could afford to get

married had a wife chosen for them by the Picture Bride method. A go-between, or marriage broker, made all the necessary arrangements. Each partner would receive a picture of their match-mate, and either one could refuse if they chose. If both mates were agreeable, the Japanese bride became legally married when her name was written in the family register. Sometimes this practice has been misunderstood by Western society. This sort of arranged marriage, however, was a recognized social convention in Japan, and also has been practiced by many cultures throughout the world. During this era the traditional Japanese influence was strong, and family advice was highly trusted.

When the picture bride arrived in America, one of her first activities was usually a trip to an American clothing store. The Japanese were aware that the Chinese, who had arrived before them, had often been ridiculed and harassed because they didn't "fit in" to American life. Wanting to avoid that problem, new brides soon replaced their kimonos with the American styles. Japanese women often labored beside their husbands in factories, farms, or family businesses in the American "Japantowns." They had the additional chores of housework and child raising. Even through all their hard work in America, these women kept the framework of beliefs, values, and customs taught to them in Japan. In many cases Japanese in America today have maintained their traditional practices to a greater extent than people still living in modern Japan. Japanese keep track of their generations in America by using the traditional counting system. The first generation to come to America is called Issei. Their children, or the second generation, are called Nisei. The third is Sansei, and the fourth Yonsei.

The early Japanese workers became very successful in America, particularly in agriculture. They brought with them from Japan a great deal of knowledge about growing large quantities of farm products on small amounts of land. They were experts at crop rotation, irrigation, and intensive farming techniques. They had been recruited to the United States to provide cheap labor for American-owned businesses and farms. However, they soon became successful enough to start their own farms and businesses and compete with non-Japanese companies. Similar to what had happened to the Chinese a few decades earlier, this success and competition began to create anti-Japanese feelings among some segments of the American population.

The San Francisco Chronicle, for example, began serious anti-Japanese writing in 1905. This newspaper encouraged the passing of laws against the Japanese. In spite of the fact that the nation of Japan had just given a quarter of a million dollars to aid earthquake victims in San Francisco, laws were being passed in that city to segregate Japanese American students from other children in the public schools. Acts of violence and anti-Japanese riots occurred and laws were passed to limit the rights of Japanese Americans. The Alien Land Act, for example, prohibited first generation Japanese immigrants from owning their own land. This law had been encouraged by those who felt threatened by the tremendous success of Japanese farmers in California. In 1907 the Gentlemen's Agreement was negotiated with Japan to limit the number of Japanese immigrants entering the U.S. In 1924 a formal Exclusion Law was passed aimed at stopping the flow of Japanese people to America.

The most serious discrimination against Japanese Americans came after December 1941, when Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese Nationals. Because of fear and anti-Japanese feelings, Japanese in this country were rounded up and put into concentration camps, which the government referred to as "relocation centers." About 110,000 people of Japanese descent were relocated from the West Coast. Two-thirds were Americans by birth, which meant many were young children. Over 2,000 established Japanese community leaders were arrested and whisked away without notice. Those who were labeled as "troublemakers" were sent to special camps at Manzanar and Tule Lake. All this happened despite the fact that both the FBI and Naval Intelligence services had proven that the Japanese in America were extraordinarily loyal and were not a threat to the United States. This loyalty was demonstrated by the thousands of families who endured four long years behind barbed wire, starting out in bleak barracks that had no doors or furniture. An even more intense show of loyalty came from the young Japanese men from the concentration camps who volunteered to serve in the United States Army. They formed the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team that served in Europe and on secret missions in the Pacific. These heroic Japanese Americans won more honors and lost more lives for their country than any other fighting unit in American military history.

When the camps were disbanded after the war, some Japanese returned home to find land and property sold off. Others had already taken huge losses with the short notice to sell and abandon their homes. Executive Order 9066 which had set up the camps, was not legally canceled until February 19, 1976. Since that time, there has been a

movement for redress to the Japanese who were kept in camps. Redress means the paying back of the money lost by Japanese Americans when they were forced to give up their businesses, lands, and homes during World War II. The most prominent organization fighting for redress is the JACL, Japanese American Citizens League. JACL was also responsible for the Naturalization Act in 1952 that finally gave first generation immigrants from all nations the right to become U.S. citizens.

After World War II Japanese Americans returned to American life with strength drawn from their hardships. They pursued education and business with vigor. They have achieved success in many areas and have contributed much to the overall quality of American life.

The Pilipino Experience

Pilipino* immigrants came to the United States in three separate waves. The first wave of immigration began shortly after the Philippines became a territory of the United States in 1899. Similar to the Japanese, the earliest Pilipino immigrants went to work in Hawaii and later began moving onto the mainland of the United States. These early Pilipinos came under the Sacada System, which was similar to the European pattern of bringing indentured servants into the country. The immigrants were required to work a specific number of years to pay for their passage and expenses in getting to America. In Hawaii the Pilipinos would work on sugar and pineapple plantations, and often

*This spelling of "Pilipino" is preferred because there is no "F" sound in the Pilipino languages. The actual pronunciation is closer to the sound of a soft "P."

find off-season jobs in canneries, hotels, restaurants, and private homes.

Higher wages attracted many Pilipinos to jobs on the U.S. mainland. Also, Japanese immigration had been slowed by the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 and stopped by the Exclusion laws in 1924, and this caused the labor recruiters to turn to Pilipinos as a new source of cheap labor. The Pilipino newcomers suffered much of the same discrimination that had been directed at the Chinese and Japanese people who came before them. When the United States entered into an economic depression during the 1930's, and Pilipinos were competing with white workers for jobs, this negative treatment increased. The U.S. government, however, could not pass Exclusion laws against the Pilipinos, as they had against the Chinese and Japanese. This was because the Philippine Islands were a territory of the U.S., and therefore Pilipinos could not be classified as "aliens." It is interesting that at this very time the U.S. officially granted the Philippines provisional independence, thus making it legal to strictly limit the number of Pilipinos entering the country. Additional laws were passed prohibiting Pilipinos from owning land and from marrying whites.

The second wave of Pilipino immigration came about the time of World War II. This group of immigrants included Pilipino veterans who served in the American Armed Services and their families. At this time several thousand Pilipinos were again recruited to work on the plantations of Hawaii. Also, hundreds of students from wealthy families in the Philippines immigrated during this period. Other Pilipinos came

to America by joining the U.S. Navy. They had to sign up for six years, instead of the customary four years. They were to serve out those years as cooks and stewards with slim chance of advancement, thus reducing them to the status of servants for other military personnel. Many Pilipinos joined the Navy because they knew they could be discharged on the West Coast of the United States, a place they thought was the "gateway to liberty and opportunity." Once in the U.S., they could then apply for citizenship.

The third Pilipino wave of immigrants came to the U.S. during the 1960's with the change of immigration laws. At this time skilled professionals such as doctors, lawyers, scientists, and nurses were being recruited. A significant difference in this group was that more than half were women. Later, martial law in the Philippines took action to stop what had become a "brain drain" from their country, since many of the finest professional people were leaving for the U.S.

The new women immigrants were especially welcomed by the Pilipino bachelors, who had come in the earlier waves. Because of laws against intermarriage with whites, many of these men had not been able to marry. Many now chose to do so even though they were late in life. It was important to them to continue the family line, and there was still the chance to have children, even if there was often 20 or 30 years difference in age between husband and wife. This type of marriage pattern, which was forced upon the Pilipino community, has been called "the late family concept."

With new immigration laws passed in 1965, more Pilipino immigrants are coming into the U.S., and the Pilipino American community is working in many ways to improve their situation. They were the first Asian group to organize labor unions. In the 1960's Pilipino workers joined with Cesar Chavez and Mexican American farm workers to strike for better wages in the grape fields of California. Pilipinos still face problems of unemployment, school drop-out rate, youth problems, and underemployment, which means that their level of pay and status often does not measure up to their level of education and ability. They have formed many community organizations, service agencies, and other groups to help keep their culture alive in the U.S.

The Korean Experience

Early Korean immigrants to the U.S. had been urged to leave Korea in 1903 during a time of drought. A few American missionaries were influential in advising Koreans to move to Hawaii. Korean laborers had a difficult time in Hawaii where the typical wage was 70 cents for a ten hour day. When labor brokers from the mainland offered twice that amount, many Korean workers traveled to the U.S. Here they met heavy competition for jobs with whites and other Asians. A Korean Christian organization was set up to provide lodging and to serve as an employment bureau.

There were 11,000 Koreans in Hawaii, and 2,000 in the United States by 1905. Immigration was abruptly stopped that same year when Russia and Japan became enemies. During that war, Korea came under Japanese

rule. With the political unrest back home, many Koreans in America abandoned hope of returning during the war.

By 1910, a few towns on the West Coast had active Korean communities, some of which still exist today in Los Angeles, California, and Gresham, Oregon. Koreans utilized the Picture Bride system, as did the Japanese. Some tensions developed between Koreans and Japanese in the United States especially during the time that the Japanese Army occupied Korea. Koreans also were excluded from white public schools at the same time as the Japanese.

Between 1945 and 1960, Korea was involved in another war, this time for their own independence. American legislation allowed certain groups of Koreans to enter the United States. These included refugees, orphans, and Korean women married to American men.

After Korea gained independence in 1960, there was a dramatic increase of Koreans leaving their country. Thousands emigrated to America. Others came as visitors and students, hoping to become permanent residents later on. The exodus of professionals from Korea was similar to the pattern of professionals leaving the Philippines.

Since the 1940's, many Koreans have earned college degrees in the United States and become professionals, such as doctors, dentists, architects, and technicians. Korean Americans are a relatively new immigrant group since over ninety percent of all Koreans in the U.S. have been here less than fifteen years. Many have been able to start their own businesses and the Korean population is now dispersed all across the nation. The largest population of Korean

Americans is in Los Angeles, where about half of the new immigrants settle. Korean Americans are keeping much of their traditional culture alive, but also learning to adapt and succeed within the dominant culture of the United States.

The Indochinese Experience

The Indochinese group of people includes Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Khmer, and a few tribal minorities from this region of the world. Some Indochinese are also Chinese nationals who were residents of Vietnam or Cambodia. Unlike the earlier Asians who came to the U.S. for economic reasons, the Indochinese have come to escape the long period of fear and hardship caused by war and political upheaval in their homeland. Some of the early refugees were workers for the U.S. government, and were able to escape by airplane when the United States pulled out of Indochina. Those who were not so lucky left by sea.

The escape by sea intensified in the years following the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, to the point of world-wide concern. Alarming stories were related by these "boat people." Many unseaworthy vessels were greatly overloaded with escaping refugees. These people often suffered piracy at sea, shortages of food and water, death of family members, and rejection by governments who did not want them to land.

The Indochinese who survived such voyages usually experienced a long series of waiting at one refugee camp after another until a sponsor finally could be found. A sponsor is an individual or church who

agrees to be responsible for giving a family a start in the community with help in housing, education, employment, and personal guidance. Most sponsors were well-meaning, but some were not. Some of the newly arrived Indochinese had unrealistic expectations about American wealth. A problem between these new immigrants and their American hosts has been the low level of understanding about both cultures. Social agencies in the U.S. have not provided enough services and information to help solve this problem. Tran Tuong Nhu, an Indochinese coordinator in San Francisco, explains part of this problem: "The American family is nuclear (single unit of parents and children) and therefore impersonal from a Vietnamese perspective." The Asian family unit is usually extended, which means that it includes brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents in the same household. Social workers and others who work with the new Asian immigrant families need to be aware of this different view of the family unit.

The Indochinese people have arrived in America so recently, that many conflicts which existed between the different groups in their homeland have not yet been worked out. Agencies need to be aware of these possible conflicts when newcomers are grouped together. For example, a Vietnamese child may not want to sit next to a Cambodian student in class -- at least not in the beginning.

Education is the main reason many Indochinese want to remain in this country. As long as they are here, they feel they can take advantage of an opportunity which is of key importance to their culture. Most of them dream of someday returning to their homeland. They are used to waiting and they are used to hardship. So, while their countries are getting settled, the Indochinese in the U.S. continue to work, seek education, and hope to save enough to see their homeland again.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What was a "hui kuan" and why was it important to the Chinese immigrants?

2. Why do you think Japanese Americans were removed from their homes and put in concentration camps like Manzanar and Tule Lake during World War II? Why do you suppose the same thing didn't happen to German Americans, since the U.S. was also at war with Germany?

3. What was the purpose of the Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japan? Name at least two other anti-Japanese laws passed in the early part of the 20th century.

4. Pilipino Americans have achieved a high level of education, yet many of them do not have jobs which match their degree of skill and training. What reasons can you give to explain why this might happen?

5. Korean and Japanese Americans both used the Picture Bride system of marriage. How did this work? Would you like to choose your marriage partner this way?

6. What problems do you think might develop as the new Indochinese immigrants begin to fit in to American life?

7. Describe at least three similarities in the experiences of Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, and Korean people who have come to the United States.

Chapter 2

Asian Picture Bride

Titles and Terms

"Asian American" is the name we use in this booklet to refer to all people of Asian ancestry living in the United States. Technically speaking, those who are not U.S. citizens would be called "Asians." However, whether they are citizens or not, using "Asian American" as a title emphasizes the two different cultural forces that work together to make these people who they are: both Asian and American. The term Asian American is relatively new, used only since the 1960's. Before that time, "Oriental" was a term often used to refer to people from Asia. The term Asian American was created by the Asian people themselves, and reflects their own choice of a common name.

However, some Asian people today still prefer the term "Oriental." Many of them feel that they may receive negative treatment from non-Asians if they try to change their image and select a new name. These Orientals have usually suffered from discrimination and racism in the past. Many of them have been denied a job, refused a place to live, been called names, or suffered threats and violence just because they were of Asian ancestry. Because of their fear of further hardships, they choose to avoid conflict by not challenging the term "Oriental."

The term "Asian American" is a title chosen by those people who work at overcoming the discrimination associated with the "Oriental" image. The new term calls for a change of mind and a sense of pride in one's Asian background. Asian American is a name used by people who want to determine the direction of their own lives. This change of name is similar to what has taken place with other ethnic groups, such as Blacks overcoming the "Negro" image of the past and Native Americans choosing to give up the "Indian" title.

The name Asian American realistically defines the double role for people of Asian ancestry living in America. In fact, Asian Americans are generated only in this country! Those who use the title Asian American are able to put aside national differences that may have been a part of their old-country feelings. Asian Americans include Chinese, Japanese, Pilipino, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and some Pacific Islander groups. Asian Americans do not forget about their own specific Asian country of origin when they call themselves

Asian Americans. This term is used in addition to the name of their specific homeland. The title is a general term that can have important political clout. For example, a Pilipino who wants to ask for a vote on his program has a relatively small community for support. However, when many Asian groups band together to support him, they have much more voting power.

"Mountain of Gold"

As we have seen, the discovery of gold in California in 1850 sparked a brisk trade by ship owners to recruit passengers from Chinese ports to travel to the United States. Printed flyers exaggerated claims, by implying that gold was literally lying in the streets of America, waiting to be picked up. When Asian newcomers arrived in America, the harsh reality was that there was limited access to gold mining, and limited access to other jobs. The white population controlled the job market as well as the laws. Those jobs that the Asian worker could have, were generally those that other workers did not want. Some of these jobs were tedious and low paying, such as crop harvesting and factory work. Other jobs were dangerous, such as building tunnels and railroads. Some jobs were considered "women's work," such as cooking, cleaning and laundry. The Asian people worked at these jobs even if they had to suffer disrespect and ill treatment from the larger society. Though they were not the best jobs, Asians were willing to endure them to support relatives in the home country. The promise to send money home for family and relatives was a serious obligation for Asian people, often lasting a lifetime.

There is a Japanese practice called "Gamaan" (Gah-mahn'). Gamaan is an act of inner strength which comes through bearing personal pain. For many Asian cultures this is an important value. Because they were expected to bear pain without complaining, Asian immigrants would not write home about hardships. Families back in the home country would receive only money and good words from their American-based relatives, and thus they would continue to believe in America as the place of golden opportunity.

Many versions of the "mountain of gold" myth existed for generations up to the present time. Part of the reason was a misunderstanding over what is considered to be a lot of money in America, compared to what is a lot of money in an Asian country. For example, an Asian soldier might get paid $50.00 a month by the government in his home-land, while an American soldier would receive six times that amount. But imagine that Asian soldier's surprise to discover that the American soldier would pay as much money for one meal in the U.S. as the entire Asian family would spend on food for a whole week in their home country.

Pioneers From East and West

In many ways Asian people came to the U.S. in an opposite pattern from European immigrants. First of all, because of the location of their homeland, Europeans arrived on the East Coast, and took part in the "go west, young man" pioneer movement. Asians arrived on the West Coast, and later moved eastward to more job opportunities.

Also, most early Asian immigrants did not come to settle down and start a new life, as did most Europeans who moved to this country. The Asians originally came as "sojourners," which meant they were here temporarily for work, intending to return home after a short period of time. The Europeans intended to settle permanently and assimilate (fit in with other Americans), while most Asians tried to maintain their own separate language, customs and dress. Most of the Asian immigrants were young men looking for jobs, whereas the Europeans were both male and female, old as well as young, and often included entire family groups.

The desire for greater religious and political freedom was a major reason bringing Europeans to America, whereas Asians already had religious freedom in their homeland. European groups came from all parts of their countries, while Asian immigrants tended to come only from certain parts of their countries.

In other ways Asians and Europeans immigrated for similar reasons. Overcrowded population, unsteady government, and disasters like flood and famine caused both groups to leave their homeland. These conditions probably caused Asians to stay longer in the United States than was originally intended. With the continuation of problems at home, many Asians chose to remain in America, where they could continue to earn money for the support of relatives in their homeland.

Major jobs attracting Asians to work in the United States were railroads, canneries, fishing, farm and factory work. Asian workers

usually arrived by boat in San Francisco, California. From there they traveled to where the jobs were available: to the croplands of California, Oregon, and Washington Territories; to the canneries and fishing industry of Alaska and the California coast; to the railroads in California, Washington, and Utah; to the mines of Nevada and the Southwest, and then further east as unfair laws put restrictions on these available jobs.

Laws, Laws and More Laws

Asian workers originally were recruited to work at jobs other Americans did not want. These included railroad building, crop harvesting and cooking. During early recruitment days, the white population was satisfied to have Asians do these necessary and unattractive jobs. A newspaper in the 1850's commented, "These celestials (Chinese) are clean, hardworking, willing to work for cheap wages, without complaint. Our community is indeed fortunate to have such reliable labour."

As we have seen, however, the American public gradually grew to have a completely different opinion of Asian workers. There had been no fear of Asian workers as long as they continued to work at less desirable jobs. Then, as some of the jobs ended, those same hardworking Asian workers moved into cities where they competed with other American workers for better jobs. For example, Chinese and Japanese railroad builders had to find other jobs when the railroads were completed. Korean and Pilipino farm workers had to find winter work when the crops were harvested.

With this job competition happening in the cities, non-Asian American workers rallied together at "Anti-Oriental" meetings and formed "Anti-Coolie Clubs" for the purpose of ridding the town of Asian workers. This anti-Asian feeling was the reason behind the creation of several of the early labor unions in this country. With group support, whites put pressure on the lawmakers and lobbied for laws against Asian people. Newspapers jumped in with stories inciting hatred. Asians were referred to as "yellow-mouthed lepers" and "scurvy opium fiends." Newspapers spread a fear they called "the yellow peril," which said that Asians were going to multiply, engulf the nation and take over. This idea failed to consider the fact that about 95 percent of the Asian immigrants were males who had little chance of increasing the Asian population by themselves. Newspapers played a major role in creating enough fear so that local, state, and federal legislation was enacted against Asians.

As we have already discussed, the most powerful anti-Asian laws were federal orders called "Exclusion Laws." These laws put a freeze on immigration for Chinese and Japanese people, and allowed only a few Pilipino, Korean, and other Asians to enter the United States. Although Exclusion Laws were illegal and unconstitutional, they existed in various forms from the 1880's until the 1950's. The Chinese and Japanese are the only people in the history of the United States who were kept from entering the country by national law.

Many local and state laws which discriminated against Asian Americans were passed during the late 1800's and early 1900's. Most of these

"Anti-Oriental" laws were made in California because about three-quarters of the Asian workers remained in that state. Some examples included:

1. $50 fine to factories for hiring Asians.
2. Laws which prohibited Asians from staying overnight in some towns.
3. Special Mining and Fishing Taxes aimed at Asian workers only.
4. Segregation laws to keep Asians from going to school with white children.
5. Laws prohibiting Asians (and other non-white people) from marrying whites.

Other anti-Asian sections were added to existing laws which had been passed against other minority groups. For example, the Alien Land Act, which prevented people of Mexican heritage from owning lands, was also applied to Asians. The denial of citizenship imposed against the Native American people was amended to also keep Asians from becoming U.S. citizens. In addition, laws forbidding "Any Black or Mulatto from testifying against a White man in court," were expanded to deny Asians equal protection within the legal system.

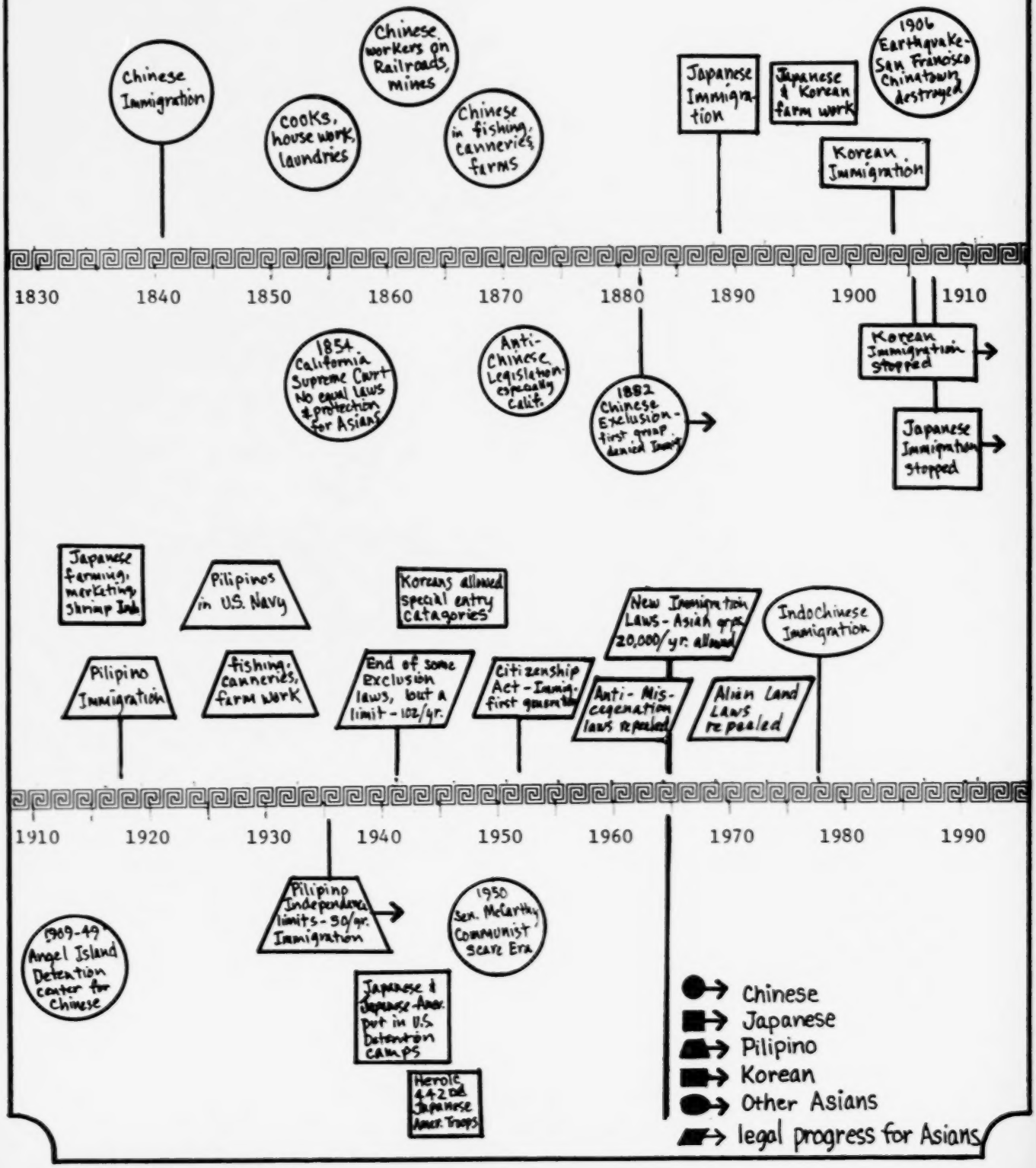
Between 1890 and 1950, many Anti-Oriental laws were declared unconstitutional. However, other laws, with new methods of discrimination, continued to be passed. Although Exclusion Laws were removed in the 1950's, it was not until 1965 that immigration laws became more equal for Asian people. There had never been a limitation on the number of immigrants from England could come to America, and other European countries had quotas of 20,000 persons a year. In comparison, Pilipinos were limited to 50 persons a year before 1965, and Chinese and Japanese were each limited to 100

persons a year. This treatment of Asian people seems in stark contrast to the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." From the point of view of many Asian people, it seemed that these words were meant for only those immigrants who arrived on the East Coast by way of Europe.

The number of immigrants allowed from various nations around the world was changed in 1965 with the passage of a new immigration law. This brought the number of immigrants allowed from Asian nations up to 20,000 per year. In response to cases of political unrest in Asia since the 1970's, the American government has granted special additional immigration from Asian nations such as Vietnam and Cambodia.

To help you summarize much of the information included in this section, please look at the chart on the following page. It presents a time-line of many of the key events in the history of Asian Americans.

ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORIC TIME LINE



Bettie Sing Luke Kan

Chapter 2 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why do many Americans of Asian ancestry choose to be called "Asian American" rather than "Oriental?"

2. How was the "Mountain of Gold" idea so important in bringing Asian people to the U.S.? How did this dream work out for the new immigrants?

3. Describe three ways that the Asian immigrants were different from those immigrants who came to the U.S. from Europe.

4. What kind of jobs did most Asian Americans perform when they first came to America? How did other Americans feel about these immigrants when they first came?

5. Describe the "Exclusion Laws" and explain why they were enacted.

6. Why do you think there were no Exclusion Laws passed against immigrants from European countries?

Chapter 3

Asian Americans in todays molticultural society

Asian Culture and Values

We have seen in the first two chapters that there were many similarities and some differences in the experiences of several Asian groups as they immigrated to the United States. In this section we will discuss four values which are important to most Asian American people. Values are those things which a cultural group feels are important; values are the ideals that guide people in their daily lives.

One common Asian value is politeness. The Asian American view of politeness can sometimes appear confusing to non-Asians if it is not

understood as a clearly defined set of manners. One habit of Asian politeness, for example, is to start a sentence with "Yes" even if the rest of the statement is in disagreement with the person being spoken to. The statement of disagreement is also often accompanied by a smile, so as not to be disruptive or impolite. The "Yes" and the smile that go along with such disagreements often seem strange to non-Asian observers, who do not understand this behavior as part of a definite commitment to politeness.

The value of politeness may sometimes lead to passive resistance on the part of an Asian person, which means he or she will refuse to do something without making a big deal out of it. For example, this may occur when an Asian student chosen to represent his class in a certain activity feels that his friend was more deserving of the honor. The Asian student may become "sick" or find some other excuse to refuse the honor.

Another form of polite manners is frequently practiced by Chinese and Japanese. The Japanese word for it is enryo (en´dree-o). This is a ritual of offering something three times, with the receiver turning it down two times and accepting on the third. Here is an example of how it works:

Person A - "I brought you a cake." (make the offer)

Person B - "Oh no! It is too much." (can't be greedy)

Person A - "You have to, it's for you." (urge, convince)

Person B - "You certainly are kind." (waiver, admire)

Person A - "You deserve it! Come, cut a piece." (insist)

Person B - "It looks good, thank you." (accept)

Asians often are not aware that they practice this system when it is a part of their upbringing. It works if both parties are attuned to the ritual. It does not work if an Asian is dealing with a Western person who expects a simple Yes or No. That would end the conversation at step 2, and the Asian would end up frustrated at losing out.

Inner strength is a strong value in most Asian cultures and is best known in the martial arts. Judo, Kung Fu, Akido, and other such disciplines require continued practice aimed at gaining physical and mental control. The goal of self-control is seen in many aspects of Asian culture. An individual is regarded as strong if he or she can endure pain and suffering and not complain. The value of inner strength also requires Asian people to think carefully before stepping in to ease another person's suffering. The suffering person may not want their help, and it is sometimes better if they can solve the problem for themselves. This practice is often misunderstood by non-Asians, and the lack of understanding has led to stereotypes of Asian people being "non-feeling," or "uncomplaining."

The Asian value of respect is related to very clear ideas about authority and order of rank. Their strong feelings about respect determine the way Asian American people act toward others. Respect is especially given to those considered higher in rank. This would include the younger child respecting the older child, the student respecting the teacher, and the citizen respecting the public official. Practice of this value means not questioning or correcting bosses, teachers, or public officials. This commitment to respect sometimes keeps Asian people from voicing legitimate complaints.

Loyalty to the community is a powerful value among most Asian American people. This value usually means putting the needs of the group and the needs of the community ahead of the needs and desires of the individual. Actions are chosen for the sake of the whole community rather than for personal gain. Nothing must be done to bring shame to the group. This value can relate to the whole community or just to the family group. This value of loyalty helps control individual behavior and also helps build a strong, unified community or family unit. For example, the Pilipino culture has a practice they call "bayanian." Bayanian is a strong community value which makes helping each other a way of life for Pilipino people.
Asian commitment to loyalty and community support may sometimes be in conflict with the dominant American culture's emphasis on the "rugged individual" who faces life alone.

Not all Asians and Asian Americans practice the values listed above. However, all Asians are affected by these values to some degree. The degree to which Asian Americans practice these values depends on how much they have assimilated to the non-Asian American culture. The more one stays in touch with the homeland culture, the more one would practice these traditional values.

Moving On and Moving Out

Asians, when they first came to the United States, had to adapt and often change their own behavior in order to get along in the new culture. As Asians stayed for longer periods and came in greater numbers, they sought mutual support with their own people and others

in similar circumstances. Although Asian groups in America were often affected by conflicts between their homeland nations, they had to develop cautious tolerance of each other in America. Laws that were written against one Asian group soon applied to other Asian groups. Discrimination in housing often created Chinatowns, Japantowns and Manilatowns (Pilipino) that grew next to each other in urban areas.

When new laws began to allow Asian wives and families to come to America, the family units created a change in atmosphere in the Chinatowns, Japantowns, and Manilatowns. Those who had small shops located in the area stayed to continue the businesses with additional help from the family. Sometimes sleeping quarters or backrooms were added for family living. The streets and alleys became the playground for the children. Others, who did not own a business, needed to move elsewhere when the families outgrew the cramped single units in the ghetto area. By this time, housing laws were less restrictive, so it was possible for Asian Americans to buy or rent houses in other parts of the city.

Before World War II the Japanese sector in Seattle, for example, was a thriving business district with many restaurants, hotels, and shops owned and operated by Japanese Americans. The relocation of this population into concentration camps during the war wiped out this district. Only a few Japanese families had been able to keep their property during this period. A handful of import shops, restaurants, and hotels had been left in the care of friends. They operated the business until the return of the Japanese owners. But most of the homes and shops had been lost, and these families had to live

elsewhere. Some returned to the same city, while others relocated to different parts of the United States.

Also, the Pilipino men who married during the later immigration period moved out of their old bachelor environment to start families. Since many of these new Pilipino wives were professionals, they could seek work which would often relocate the family to other cities. This movement of Asian families outside of the city and to other parts of the country increased as the next generations gained better education and jobs. The total effect of these changes was to spread the Asian population into new areas throughout the nation.

Today the Asian urban areas have merged into what is called the International District in several U.S. cities. Asian families who live elsewhere still return to these districts for food and services familiar to their Asian background. The younger generations are increasingly active in reviving and improving the districts. These areas represent a place that is part of their roots. For the newer Asian immigrants, the International Districts are a place to start new roots.

A Key Called Education

Education has always been highly regarded by Asian cultures. The Asian immigrants passed on that value to their Asian American children. The opportunities in America were in drastic contrast to what was available in the old country. Most Asian immigrants who came in the early days could not afford education in their homeland country, where

only those who could pay could be educated. Famine, floods and changing political conditions were more pressing problems. For many Asian villages it was difficult to find a learned scholar to teach their children in their own dialect. There were many dialects within Asian countries, and those who spoke one could not necessarily speak another. Also, in many Asian countries there was an exam system to eliminate all but a few from getting a higher education.

Because of these problems in the homeland, Asian American parents had high hopes for their children in the public schools of America. Here education for everyone was a right of citizenship. Many of the Asian parents expected their children to learn the old culture as well as the new. Thus, many Asian American children had to put in double duty at school, going to the American public school during the day and then to a Japanese or Chinese school in the afternoons and on Saturdays.

Education was important to Asians who wanted their children to move beyond low-paying, menial jobs. Higher education helped some start their own businesses when discrimination kept them from being employed outside of their community. Education was the key for all Asian groups. The Pilipino author, Carlos Bulosan, wrote a great deal about the importance of education in his book, America is in the Heart.

Today, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans have the highest average years of education compared to any other group in the United States. Because of their high level of education, Asian Americans have entered into many highly skilled professional and technical jobs. Chinese Americans,

for example, have a higher percentage of their people in professional and technical jobs than any other ethnic group in America. Because of continued prejudice and discrimination, however, there are still areas of the job market where Asian Americans are not adequately represented. Also, for the Asian American group as a whole, the level of employment and income still does not measure up to their level of skill, education, and training. Several organizations in the Asian American community are working actively today to overcome this problem.

Actions and Accomplishments

Since their earliest immigration to this country Asians have contributed much to American society. Chinese brought skills to create better methods of processing foods in canneries and sugar mills. A Chinese man, Ah Bing, developed the Bing cherry, one of the four varieties now grown extensively by American farmers. Lue Gim Gong developed a Valencia orange that could grow all year long and saved the Florida citrus industry from being plagued by fruit disease. A Chinese pilot, Fung Joe Guey, was the first to build and fly an aircraft on the West Coast, in 1909.

Japanese and Pilipinos brought farm methods from their countries. The methods of crop rotation, composting, irrigation, draining marshland, and plant propagation greatly improved the production of crops. At one time, the Japanese farmers in California grew ninety percent of the fresh produce for market, although they owned only ten percent of the farmland. A Japanese man, George Shima, built an agricultural empire by being the first to grow potatoes for market. The Japanese

and Pilipino farm workers, along with Mexican American laborers, were active in forming the first Farmworkers Union.

Asians and Asian Americans today have also made many important contributions and achievements in other areas to enhance the quality of life in America. In the following paragraphs several of these individuals are mentioned, with a code letter given to represent their ethnic group: (C) Chinese, (J) Japanese, (P) Pilipino, and (K) Korean.

In the area of science, Samuel Ting (C) won the 1976 Nobel Prize for his work on subatomic particles. Newton Wesley (Uyesugi) (J) developed contact lenses. Agapito Flores (P) developed the fluorescent light, and Ed San Juan (P) was the designer for the lunar rover. A Korean doctor, Richard You, gained fame for his work in sports medicine.

Asian Americans have been successful in politics in only the past twenty years. Up to that time, public sentiment rarely voted an Asian into office. The first to be elected on the West Coast was Wing Luke (C), who became a Seattle City Councilman in 1962. Daniel Ken Inouye (J) became the first Japanese American senator. He had served heroically during World War II in the 442nd Regiment, and was seen nationally on television handling the Watergate trials. March Fong Eu was elected as the California Secretary of State. A number of Asians have become judges.

Asian Americans have also gained notoriety in the arts. George Tsutakawa (J), an art professor at the University of Washington, has designed many bronze fountains in the Northwest. Val Laigo (P) is a

painter and designer. Paul Horiuchi (J) is internationally known for his collage compositions, and Dong Kingman (C) has gained fame for his water color paintings. James Wong Howe (C) was a Hollywood cameraman during the 1920's and developed many improvements in filming methods. He won awards for work on The Rose Tattoo and Funny Girl. Architects include Minoru Yamasaki (J), who designed the Pacific Science Center and the IBM Building in Seattle and the World Trade Center in New York.

Famous Asian entertainers include Bruce Lee (C), Helen Funni (J), Barbara Luna (P), Pat Suzuki (J) and Mako (J). Keye Luke (C) plays the blind master in the Kung Fu television series, and Philip Ahn (K) plays the other master. Evelyn Mandac (P) is a famous opera soprano, and the two sisters and one brother in the Chung (K) family have earned international reputations on the cello, violin, and piano.

The number of Asian American writers is growing. Carlos Bulosan (P) wrote about his people, as did Laurence Yep (C), Betty Lee Sung (C), Maxine Hong Kingston (C), and Jade Snow Wong (C), who wrote the bestseller, Fifth Chinese Daughter. John Okada (J) wrote "No-No Boy," a story about a conscientious objector during World War II. His work was not popular or respected until recent times. Yoshiko Uchida (J) and Jose Arvego (P) are authors of children's books. Richard Kim (K) and Younghill Kang (K) have successfully interpreted the Korean experience to the world of literature.

In the world of sports there have been several Asian Americans among our Olympic champions. Vicki Manalo Draves (P) was the 1948 U.S. Women's diving champion. Sammy Lee (K) was the 1948 and 1952 Olympic

high diving champ, and Tommy Kono (J) was the 1952 and 1956 Gold Medal weight lifter. Tai Babalonia (P) was the 1980 Olympic skater who had to drop out when her partner was injured. Another Asian athlete is Roman Gabriel (P), a quarterback in professional football.

Although Asians have achieved success in many fields, there are a number of occupations where there are few Asians and Asian Americans. Only in the past few years have Asian Americans been able to enter the police and fire departments. These people are especially important in communities which have significant Asian American populations. The building trades, airlines, and public media are other areas that have very sparse representation from the Asian population. However, as Asian Americans begin to move into these and other areas of employment, they will continue to have an even greater impact on our country's future.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Name four values shared by many Asian American people. Pick one and describe how it has sometimes been misunderstood by non-Asian people.

2. Give at least three reasons why Asian Americans began to move out of the central urban areas called Chinatown, Japantown, and Manilatown.

3. What are four reasons why it was difficult to achieve a good education in many of the homeland regions from which Asian Americans came?

4. Why do you think Asian Americans, such as Carlos Bulosan, placed such a high value on education in America?

5. Who was our first Japanese American Senator? What are two of his other accomplishments?

6. Give at least four examples of how Asian Americans have achieved greatness or offered something special to all Americans.

7. Describe how you feel about studying this Asian American booklet. What are some things you liked about it? What didn't you like?

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